

## That Troublesome Thief.

TO B. C. MOOMAW.

You will pardon me for giving your article in G. M. No. 15, p. 227, at least a passing notice.

I would notice first the seeming difficulty in the statements of the three evangelists—a proposition predicated on the evidence of two or more witnesses is certainly of more force than that based on one, especially when the two are eye witnesses and the one has his second hand.

Our first witness says, "The thieves (plural) also which were crucified with him cast the same in his teeth. (Matt. 27:44). Our second witness says, "And they (plural) that were crucified with him reviled him." Mark 15:32. Here is direct testimony by two witnesses that these thieves were revilers. The first says, "They that passed by reviled him," and the thieves "cast the same in his teeth." And the second witness plainly says, "they reviled him." Now we will let Paul act as referee in the case and certainly no one could object to such a noted man as he to decide the case, all ought to abide his decision. Let us hear him at any rate. "The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Cor. 6:9. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers," etc., 10th verse. These two witnesses do not only call them "revilers," but they insist on calling them "thieves" as well, and our referee has declared that such could not inherit the kingdom of God. According to this state of facts it is hard for you to get the thief saved, as you do in your article referred to. Of course you do it without regarding the above testimony, but I do not see how it can be done consistent with truth. Admitting the validity of the two witnesses examined, the controversy would end here. But we shall pay proper attention to the statement of your witness, viz. Luke.

Where he gets his authority for his statement I am not prepared to say, but one thing is certain, if his statement is insisted upon as valid, then is a contradiction created most assuredly.

But I pass to notice the difficulties attending Luke's statements. The difficulties, however, are not so much with Luke as with the writer. The writers always seem to see in the thief's petition a request for present salvation, which is not the case. They also seem to see in Christ's answer the grant of a present salvation, which is equally absurd.

Let us look at the facts as they really are. "Lord remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." Norton's translation has it "Remember me when you come to reign." To which Fulsom agrees.

I must naturally conclude that the thief was acquainted with the prophecies, and made his request consistent with them—the reasonable state of affairs. Now if Christ's answer had reference to the request (and what else could it relate to) the answer is very applicable to the request, and the difficulty with people is in the time and not in the place. In the first place I challenge the proof that Paradise has an existence now. In the second place the scriptures prove abundantly, (as I can show if required) that Paradise will be restored when Christ comes to reign. I question the existence of Paradise from the meaning of the word. It is a Persian word, being transferred to the Hebrew, then to Greek, and from Greek to English, and in its Perso-Hebraic form—pardais—it occurs in Neh. 2:8, and is rendered "forest" by King James' translators. The same word occurs again in Eccl. 2:5, and is there rendered "orchard." And in Cant. 4:13 the meaning of the word is expressed in this language: "A garden enclosed is my sister bride, a spring shut up a fountain sealed. Thy sprouts are a paradise of pomegranate trees, with fruits of most pleasant ones, cypress flowers with spikenard. Spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloes, with all the chief of the spices, a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters and streams of Lebanon."

From these examples we may know what the Hebrews understood by a paradise, viz. a tract of land well watered and abounding with choice trees pleasant to the eyes, and yielding luscious fruit and fragrant flowers, etc., etc.; and not an unknown

place where departed spirits dwell. If you will just take the trouble to turn and read Isa. 51:3, and 55:13, and 41:18-20; Ezk. 36:34-36, and 28:13, and 31:7, 8, you will get something of an idea what the thief asked to enjoy and what Christ promised he should—if he promised anything.

I might write much more on the subject, but think it unnecessary. I submit it for your consideration, and if what I have written is not in accord with the scriptures, I would gladly be corrected. For many years I read the Scriptures with denominational glasses on, but thank the Lord, I am now reading for the truth's sake. I need not care what anybody thinks if they do not think according to the truth. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" and Christ must save, and no men nor set of men can save outside of God's truth, hence, I need not care what they think, practice or teach.

Yours in love of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

J. B. LAIR.

## Pointers.

BY E. L. HILDEBRAND.

The train had begun to move from the depot when from the rear came a pitiful cry as if some one had been crushed under the wheels. The train stops and people rush out expecting to see a form prostrated on the track. On looking no deplorable sight is seen, but a portly old lady is coming down the track after the train. She has her baggage in her arms and as she mounts the hind car and takes a seat, deposits her baggage on two other seats, and looks around defiantly as much as to say, "I'll teach you fellows for trying to run off from me." In fact she had stopped the train.

Frequently when the church is moving along serenely and all is in good working order some member will get behind and then begin to cry out, hold on there, wait till I catch up. Don't pray so much. Your singing don't suit me. Then the whole church has to stop until they catch up. Come brother be at the depot when the train moves and so avoid making trouble and making the good work stop to let you on. But "grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

## EXTORTION.

Some time since I heard two men talk in a restaurant talking over a certain business transaction when one of them remarked: "He don't belong to the Baptist church and he will not get to heaven if he charges that much." No doubt the man had in mind Paul's injunction to the Corinthians when he wrote "Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God."

The motto for all should be demand only what you would give.

## A USEFUL CLOCK.

While at a social gathering a gentleman remarked that he had a clock in his room that was conducive to his slumbers. If the clock stopped after night he would awake the moment it ceased to run. Each one carries with them a chronometer that controls their slumbers to a greater extent than the man's clock influenced him. It was important that the man keep his clock in order and it is very necessary to our peace and happiness to have a "conscience void of offence toward God and man." A good, pure, tender convicting conscience is very essential to our slumbers and waking moments.

My brother if your conscience is out of order, Jesus is the great master workman who can set it in order, so "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

## A SUBSTITUTE.

A brother once asked a man, who was very much wrapped up in his farm and business in general, to come to church next Sunday. The man of business with usual alacrity said he would come or send some one." He did not discern the importance of each one "working out his own salvation with fear and trembling."

## AMEN.

A minister once after preaching for two hours remarked in his discourse "what shall I say next?"

when a brother who was either full or wanted something to fill an aching void elsewhere cried out, "amen."

This brings to mind another instance where a preacher had as his text "if by eating meat I cause my brother to offend" etc. After preaching for an hour and a half on pride, the people began to leave, when he remarked "I guess I am feeding you folks too strong meat." It was not the quality or quantity of meat that fondered the people, but it was the lack of both that sickened them. Too much dirt and not enough solid food. Suppose Paul's advice is applicable "Be instant in season and out of season." Good common sense and judgment are requisites to successful preaching.

## I DON'T BELONG TO ANY CHURCH.

While visiting at the home of a brother a seedy looking chap came to the door and ask "for a bite" when he was kindly requested by the hostess to "come in, that dinner would soon be ready."

During the course of the conversation the subject of politics came up, when one of the number asked the man if he was a Prohibitionist; he replied innocently that "he did not belong to any church." There are a great many professed Christians, who if you ask them if they are saved they will say they do not know, but hope so. Now it is the prerogative of every one to know "he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: etc. 1 John 4:2, 3.

## A Few Thoughts.

BY ANNIE WHIPKEY.

As the Scriptures are the voice of God making known his will and the way in which men can be accepted of him, those who possess them have blessings much greater than those who do not. Hence they should be given to all and all should be taught to read and obey them. The fact that God takes occasion with regard to the sins of men to display his perfection does not alter the evil nature of sin or lessen the guilt or danger of those who commit it. Those who do evil for the purpose of accomplishing what they call good, or break the law of God, professedly to honor him, will be justly condemned and awfully punished. The description of the natural character of man which God gives in the Bible applies to all men. It is a description of the human race and shows that all men are sinners, guilty and justly condemned, and that if saved, it must be not on account of their works and worthiness, but on account of the works and worthiness of Christ. The way of salvation revealed in the Old Testament was the same which was revealed in the New. The revelation was not so clear and full, and it was addressed more to the outward senses, but in both the salvation revealed is of grace, not of debt, obtained not by works but by faith, and given not on account of human merits, but the merits of Christ. "Jehovah is the creator, preserver and benefactor of all, Jew and Gentile, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free." When they believe in Christ, he accepts them with readiness, adopts them into his family as his own children and loves them with equal affection. He imprints on them his own blessed image, and as they treat each other, so he regards them as treating him. The way of saving sinners through the incarnation, obedience, suffering, death, resurrection and intercession of Christ, and by faith in him, show that the law of God is holy, just and good; that the violation of it is unspeakably wicked, and that it can not be violated with impunity; while the motives for obeying it in order to honor God, to show gratitude to the redeemer and become in heart and life like Him who was a living personification of his excellence, are greatly increased. Such love and obedience are secured as never were, and never will be secured among men in any other way. In perfectly obeying the divine law Christ was a pattern of human perfection, which all who believe in him supremely desire and habitually strive to copy, saying from the heart, each for himself:

"Such love and meekness so divine,  
I would transcribe and make them mine.  
Be thou my pattern, make me bear  
More of thy gracious image here;  
Then God the Judge shall own my name  
Among the followers of the Lamb."

Pickrell, Neb.